

The Rush County Council met in regular session on June 11, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. with Gerald Mohr, Chairman, Warren Norris, Charles Smith, Janet Kile, Marvin Hedrick, Kevin Spilman, Jerry Kent, Jodi Harr, Deputy Auditor and Leigh Morning, County Attorney in attendance.

Chairman, Gerald Mohr called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the May meeting were approved on a motion by Charles Smith and seconded by Warren Norris.

HEALTH DEPT

Rush County Health Officer, Dr. Dorothy Boersma, appeared before the council to ask for an additional appropriation in the Indiana Local Health Dept Trust Fund 118. The request is to help fund fall programs for Partners for a Healthy Rush County. It will also be used for equipment upgrades and immunizations. Marvin Hedrick made a motion to approve the additional appropriation to the Indiana Local Health Dept Trust Fund 118 in the amount of \$12,576.84. Kevin Spilman seconded. Motion carried.

ECDC

John McCane, ECDC Director, updated the commissioners on the North Industrial Park and the Intat expansion. He spoke of his partnership with the Small Business Administration and introduced Peggy Cenova. Cenova reviewed services offered to Rush County by the Small Business Administration. They have held four training sessions and help to start two new businesses resulting in eighteen new jobs. They have also assisted small businesses in obtaining start up loans.

EXTENSION OFFICE

Kristi Amos notified the council of the retirement of Marcia Snyder. She will retire on August 31, 2014 after 41 years of service for the county. The extension office would like permission to hire someone to fill Marcia's position. They would like the new person to be able to work with Snyder for at least a week before her retirement. Councilman Charles Smith asked Amos if there was a need for two full time assistants in their office. Amos responded that yes it does require two full time employees. They not only assist Amos but they also assist the growing Healthy Rush County programs being developed by Gracie Marlatt. Councilman Marvin Hedrick asked how much part time help the extension office currently uses. Amos responded they use the summer intern and do have some dollars budgeted for part time but do not use it. Hedrick noted that part time would be twenty nine (29) hours per week which is very close to full time. Amos noted that Franklin County and Wayne County have both hired a part time person and are not pleased with the result. She is looking for a specific skill set that she may not be able to find in a part time employee. Hedrick made a motion to table the decision to hire until the July council meeting. This would give everyone time to look at all options. Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried. Amos will not be available at the July meeting but will send someone in her place.

SHARES

A representative from Shares, Inc. submitted a budget request for 2015 donation made by the commissioners. They have facilities in Rush, Henry, and Shelby counties. Locally fifty (50) disabled adults participate in their programs. Chairman Gerald Mohr thanked him for the information and suggested he make this same presentation to the county commissioners.

AREA PLAN

RheaDawn Buckley, Area Plan Director, requested permission to hire someone to help in the APC office. She would prefer a full time person but could make a twenty nine (29) hour a week part time position work. The Area Plan Commission did give their permission to hire. Councilman Hedrick stated the council has not received monthly department reports in some time. Buckley stated she had given “someone” the March and April reports but has not had time to complete any after that. Councilman Kent asked if anyone had additional conversations with the city regarding their plan for area planning. No one has. His concern is that if we hire another person and have to let them go at the end of the year, the county could end up paying unemployment costs. Councilman Spilman asked if Diana Todd has worked any hours for her. Buckley stated that Todd had agreed to work every other Friday so Buckley could have her day off. The office will be closed this Friday because Todd cannot work. County Attorney Leigh Morning noted this position is an exempt position so Buckley is not entitled to the sixty four (64) hour work schedule. Buckley stated she would hire a part time person with the understanding that it is a month by month position. Chairman Mohr noted that the council approved at their May meeting for the Area Plan Office to hire someone to work fourteen (14) hours per week. Buckley will bring up to date office statistics to the July council meeting.

Later in the council meeting, Councilman Hedrick noted that since the Area Plan Commission Board decided to hire Buckley as the Director with a starting pay of \$37,648.00, he has received several calls regarding her salary compared to other courthouse employees. County Attorney Morning will research the legalities of a salary decrease in the salary ordinance. This issue will be revisited at the July council meeting.

JAIL

Eric Ratts, from DLZ, presented a slide presentation on the four sites reviewed for the possible location of a new jail. The first thing he noted was that we have an excellent GIS system and information on the county website. He suggested we look at the minimum of 5.3 acres to allow for storm water drainage, parking, and to allow for expansion if needed in the future. He listed some pros and cons of the four sites he was asked to look at. Councilman Kent asked if they had looked at the county farm site or at the cost of moving the power lines on the block of the current jail to allow for expansion to what we already have. They have not but they will review any site the county asked them to. Ratts noted that many new jails have a court hearing room for video court. Kent mentioned maybe the county should consider moving the courts to the new jail location. Commissioner Mark Bacon stated the current jail location is probably not big enough and that the county should look at the cost of running water and sewage to land the county already owns compared to purchasing new ground.

At this time Commissioner Bruce Levi noted his attendance. Roll Call was taken by county attorney Leigh Morning of the County Commissioners present. Bruce Levi and Mark Bacon answered. Ken Masters was absent.

Commissioner Levi noted that Henry County is already three to four years into the process of building a new jail but it is an option to speak to them about sharing a jail facility. He also noted that it is time to start this discussion with our community. We need to build support for the new jail. With the changes in Indiana law effective July 1, 2014, there is the potential for us to have to house more inmates so we need to move more quickly on this issue. Ratts noted that in Perry County they had bigger support by using income tax to finance the jail rather than property tax.

Audience member, Becky Puckett, asked if there are any public meetings scheduled. Levi stated not yet but there will be soon.

DLZ will get cost estimate for water/sewage to the county farm and also to move the power lines at the current jail location. He will report back to the committee.

SHERIFF

Sheriff Jeff Sherwood reported 44 inmates with only 5 sentenced. After further consideration of using Nexel for Reverse 911, it was decided to stay with Code Red. He has not received the blue book information for the Sheriff Retirement Fund but should have it by the end of the week.

The Merit Board and the Deputies have ask for him to include an additional full time Deputy in the 2015 budget. As the drug problem in Rush County continues to grow, they feel the department needs another full time deputy to assist with the investigations. Currently it is done on a part time basis and it is not enough. Sherwood will talk to both of the sheriff candidates to get their input.

The Sheriff pay contract is based on the prosecutor salary set by the state of Indiana. Effective July 1 the Supreme Court gives raises to prosecutors which entitle the sheriff to additional pay. This year the state is giving a one- time two percent (2%) bonus. The cost of the bonus for prosecutor would be \$2,682.24. Sherwood questioned how much of that he would be entitled to. Morning stated he would get one half which is \$1,341.12. He does have the money in his 2014 budget to pay this. Marvin Hedrick made the motion to pay Sherwood one half of the bonus in the amount of \$1,341.12 by the end of 2014. Jerry Kent seconded. Motion carried.

The Merit Board promoted Deputy Doug Keith to Sergeant. Sherwood would like to have the \$1,000 additional pay added to Keith's current salary effective July 1. Kevin Spilman made a motion to advertise an amended salary ordinance to include the additional \$1,000.00 pay to Keith's salary. Warren Norris seconded. Motion carried.

SURTAX

Motor driven cycles are now being assessed excise tax by the BMV. Counties may impose surtax on the same vehicles. Ordinance 2010-1 was amended to charge \$25.00 for Motor Driven Cycles effective January 1, 2015 on a motion by Warren Norris and seconded by Kevin Spilman. Motion carried.

AUDITOR

MaryAnn Beard, Auditor, requested a transfer in the Platbook Fund 110 from equipment to repairs. Motion to approve the transfer in the amount of \$3,500.00 was made by Charles Smith and seconded by Janet Kile. Motion carried.

COURTHOUSE RENOVATION

Judge David Northam left for consideration by the council, a Long Range Plan agreement from Architura. The amount of the contract is \$28,000 for Architura to provide planning, drawings and costs estimates for the needed renovation of the courthouse. The County Commissioners will also need to consider this proposal. Future council member Scott Barnes suggested the county look at a design/build contractor for the renovation. He does know a couple of them and will have them contact Commissioner Bruce Levi. DLZ also does courthouse renovation. It was agreed that the new jail and the courthouse should be considered at the same time.

RUSH COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Jerry Kent updated the council on the counties redevelopment commission. The APC did not approve the Pioneer project. The redevelopment commission is waiting to see what the county commissioners and the city do with the project.

BONUS PAY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

In response to conversations during the 2014 budget hearings, Councilman Marvin Hedrick and Councilman Jerry Kent presented a proposal of bonus pay based on years of service for all county employees. They have met with Highway Superintendent Jerry Sitton, Sheriff Jeff Sherwood and Auditor MaryAnn Beard to develop a plan. The council will review and consider it at the 2015 budget hearings.

Motion to adjourn was initiated by Charles Smith. Marvin Hedrick seconded the motion. Motion carried.

/s/ Gerald Mohr
Gerald Mohr, Chairman

/s/ Warren Norris
Warren Norris

/s/ Charles Smith
Charles Smith

/s/ Janet Kile
Janet Kile

/s/ Marvin Hedrick
Marvin Hedrick

/s/ Kevin Spilman
Kevin Spilman

/s/ Jerry Kent
Jerry Kent

ATTEST:

/s/ Mary Ann Beard

Mary Ann Beard, Auditor